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February 4, 2003

COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

Attn: Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences

Re: Patent Application of Neil SHANMAN et al.
Serial No. 09/294,461
Filed: April 19, 1999
Group Art Unit - 3625
Examiner: Forest Thompson
Docket No. S012-3653

RECEIVED

FEB 19 2003

GROUP 3600

S I R:

Appellants submit herewith, in triplicate, their brief on appeal in connection with the captioned application. A check in the amount \$160.00 is enclosed herewith to cover the required appeal fee. Should the check prove insufficient for any reason, authorization is hereby given to charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 01-0268.

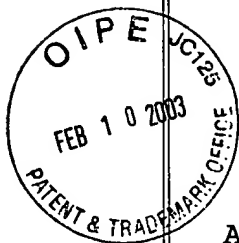
Respectfully submitted,

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BLA:db
Enclosures

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

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Application of : *19 Duff*
Neil SHANMAN et al. : *PD 2/24/03*
Serial 09/294,461 : Group Art Unit - 3625
Filed: April 19, 1999 : Examiner - Forest Thompson
For: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR THE :
TARGETED DISTRIBUTION OF :
DISCOUNT COUPONS OVER A :
NETWORK : Docket No. S012-3653

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COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

BRIEF ON APPEAL

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GROUP 3625

S I R:

An appeal has been taken from the final rejection of
claims 29-40 and appellants present herewith their brief in
support of the appeal.

(1) Real Party of Interest:

The real parties of interest in this appeal are
individual inventors Neil Shanman and Irwin Pearl.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences:

Appellants and appellants' counsel are aware of no other appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a direct bearing upon the Board's decision in the present appeal.

(3) Status of Claims:

The present application was filed with claims 1-13. Claims 14-40 were added by amendment and claims 1-28 were canceled. Claims 29-40 stand finally rejected. The present appeal is directed to the final rejection of claims 29-40. No claim stands allowed.

(4) Status of Amendments:

In response to a final Office Action dated July 1, 2002, an amendment after final was filed by certificate of mail dated November 1, 2002. In an Advisory Action dated December 17, 2002, the Examiner indicated that the amendment after final would be entered and the final rejections would be maintained. No second or subsequent amendment after final has been filed.

(5) Summary of Invention:

The present invention relates to a data processing system and method for the interactive generation of a personalized shopping list over a network, the shopping list being customized to reflect a consumer's choice of a specific retail outlet by specifying aisle locations of goods selected for purchase by the consumer (specification, pg. 1, first full paragraph) (claims 29 and 40). The present invention also generates coupons based on the consumers selection of goods id.

As described at pages 35-40 of the specification, in accordance with the present invention, a consumer is shown one of a generic list of goods generally sold in a selected type of retail outlet or a specific list of goods sold in an actual retail outlet selected by the consumer. Once the consumer has indicated the items he or she plans to purchase from the displayed generic or specific list, the system returns to the consumer a shopping list that is customized to indicate the aisle locations of each intended purchase within the selected retail outlet. The shopping list obtained by the present invention serves as a roadmap of the selected retail outlet so the shopper can shop more efficiently.

The personalized shopping list permits manufacturers of products sold within the retail outlet selected by the

consumer to electronically generate and deliver coupons categorically matched to planned purchases by a consumer prior to a consumer's actual visit to the retail outlet.

Moreover, if coupons corresponding to the goods selected by the consumer are not available at the selected retail outlet, the claimed system transmits coupons for competitively-branded goods or for the selected goods at another retail outlet, in addition to transmitting a personalized shopping list (independent claim 29).

The present invention (claim 40) also relates to a system which has a server that contains data identifying an inventory of goods offered for sale and graphical data for displaying a representation of the retail outlets including a physical layout of the goods in the retail outlets. The server further contains means for transmitting to a consumer unit for display thereon a representation of a selected actual retail outlet including the physical layout of the goods in the selected retail outlet.

Accordingly, the present invention provides a personalized shopping list containing a list of goods selected by a consumer in a selected retail outlet along with the aisle locations of the selected goods in the selected retail outlet. The personalized shopping list of the present invention contains aisle locations at any one of an unlimited number of retail outlets.

Shoppers typically prepare a shopping list prior to visiting their preferred supermarket or other large retail outlet. This is done for convenience purposes and expedites the shopping experience. By offering consumers the ability to electronically prepare an interactive shopping list over a network through keyboard entries, mouse clicks, voice commands or via virtual shopping, consumers are given the added benefit of a customized shopping list and coupons tailored to their selection of goods. This enables consumers to obtain advanced knowledge of the aisle location of each intended purchase within their selected retail outlet and enhances shopping convenience. In addition to benefiting the consumer, the inventive system and method assists retailers in inventory anticipation and helps build customer loyalty. For manufacturers of products sold in the retail environment, the inventive system and method provides a targeted method of delivering coupons to pre-qualified customers that are categorically matched to planned purchases, thereby avoiding the waste and inefficiency of conventional coupon distribution methods.

(6) Issue:

A primary issue presented by this appeal is whether the subject matter of claims 29, 30 and 32-40 is rendered obvious by Zip Coupons in view of Excite, Scroggie and Burke.

Another primary issue presented by this appeal is whether the subject matter of claim 31 is rendered obvious by Zip Coupons in view of Excite, Scroggie and Katz.

(7) Grouping of Claims:

In the final Office Action, claims 29, 30 and 32-40 were grouped together in a single ground of rejection under 35 §103(a). Claim 31 was grouped separately in a single ground of rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Appellants respectfully submit that the rejected claims fall in the following groups, the claims in each group being separately patentable for the reasons given below:

- (a) Independent claim 29 along with dependent claims 31-35, 38 and 39;
- (b) Dependent claim 30;
- (b) Dependent claim 36;
- (c) Dependent claim 37; and
- (d) Independent claim 40.

(8) Argument:

Claims 29, 30 and 32-40 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over a publication entitled "Internet Infinity Signs Exclusive Distribution Agreement With Zip Coupons", PR Newswire P106NYM035 ("Zip

Coupons") in view of a publication entitled "Excite Reports First Quarter 1999 Results", PR Newswire 15 April 1999 ("Excite"), U.S. Patent No. 6,014,634 to Scroggie et al. ("Scroggie") and U.S. Patent No. 5,848,399 to Burke ("Burke"). The Examiner stated that Zip Coupons discloses the claimed structure including the plurality of consumer units, communication means, a server having a memory for storing retail outlet data and coupon data, a data processing unit, first means for transmitting a list of individually-selectable participating retail outlets through the selection of the types of coupons that the consumer is interested in, and display of available coupons, the associated merchants being identified with the coupons, second means responsive to the selection of a retail outlet for transmitting a list of individually-selectable goods offered for sale by the selected retail outlet, as illustrated through the representation and selection of the coupons, and third means for transmitting coupons corresponding to selected goods. The Examiner stated that through the selection of coupons for desired products or services, the consumer inherently selects products or services for purchase.

The Examiner pointed out that Zip Coupons discloses that advertisers will pay for placement of "zip" coupons on the Internet and consumers will select a coupon interest

category, which implies that a list of the participating retail outlets are displayed.

The Examiner further acknowledged that Zip Coupons does not explicitly show that the participating retail outlets are individually selectable by the user and, in response to the selection of a retail outlet, a list of goods is transmitted. However, the Examiner argued that this is inherently disclosed by Zip Coupons, since the consumer selects coupons for products that he or she intends to purchase. On this basis, the Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious to modify Zip Coupons to specifically disclose that the retail outlets are individually selectable by the consumer and, in response to the selection of a retail outlet, a list of goods is transmitted for which discounts are available. The Examiner pointed out that when coupons are selected for each of the participating retail outlets as disclosed by Zip Coupons, products and retail stores are being individually selected by the consumer.

The Examiner further stated that Excite discloses that consumers are able to access coupons from on-line merchants personalized based on an individual's shopping interests, as may be portrayed by a shopping list. In view of this disclosure, the Examiner has taken the position that it would have been obvious to modify Zip Coupons to disclose a

list of individually-selectable retail outlets and transmit a list of goods for which discount coupons are available.

The Examiner pointed out that Scroggie discloses a method of obtaining a shopping list, whereby a list of participating retail outlets is displayed to consumers for selection, transmitting a list of products available for purchase, receiving customer selections from the list of products, and then transmitting a shopping list to the customer.

Claim 31 stands finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zip Coupons in view of Excite, Scroggie and U.S. Patent No. 6,055,513 to Katz et al. ("Katz"). Katz was cited as disclosing the claim 31 feature that the communications medium comprises a public telephone network and means for acquiring caller ID data to identify the geographical location of the consumer units.

Burke was cited as disclosing the claim 29 requirement for data representative of the physical layout of a retail outlet, including aisle location of goods offered for sale.

The subject matter of independent claims 29 and 40 is believed to be patentably distinct from the prior art of record for the reasons stated hereinbelow.

The present invention relates to a data processing system and method for generating a personalized shopping list over a network, the shopping list being customized to reflect a consumer's choice of a specific retail outlet by specifying aisle locations of goods selected for purchase by the consumer. The present invention also generates coupons based on the consumer's selection of goods.

In accordance with each of independent claims 29 and 40, a consumer is shown one of a generic list of goods generally sold in a selected type of retail outlet or a specific list of goods sold in an actual retail outlet selected by the consumer. Once the consumer has indicated the items he or she plans to purchase from the displayed generic or specific list, the system returns to the consumer a shopping list that is customized to indicate the aisle locations of each intended purchase, within the selected retail outlet. The shopping list thus obtained becomes a roadmap of the selected retail outlet so the shopper can shop more efficiently.

The personalized shopping list permits manufacturers of products sold within the retail outlet selected by the consumer to electronically generate and deliver coupons categorically matched to planned purchases by a consumer prior to a consumer's actual visit to the retail outlet.

As further recited by independent claim 29, if coupons corresponding to the goods selected by the consumer are not available at the selected retail outlet, the inventive system transmits coupons for competitively-branded goods or for the selected goods at another retail outlet, in addition to transmitting a personalized shopping list. This subject matter of independent claim 29 is not disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record and was not addressed by the Examiner in the lengthy final rejection. Thus, claim 29 is believed to be patentable over the prior art. Moreover, this subject matter of claim 29 renders claim 29 separately patentable.

Claim 40 recites a system which has a server that contains data identifying an inventory of goods offered for sale and graphical data for displaying a representation of the retail outlets including a physical layout of the goods in the retail outlets. The server further contains means for transmitting to a consumer unit for display thereon a representation of a selected actual retail outlet including the physical layout of the goods in the selected retail outlet. This subject matter renders claim 40 separately patentable. The Examiner relied upon Burke as disclosing this claimed limitation, but failed to acknowledge the significant distinction between displaying a simulated retail outlet, as

disclosed by Burke, and the representation of an actual retail outlet selected by the consumer from a virtually unlimited number of actual retail outlets, as required claim 40.

For the foregoing reason, appellants respectfully submit that claim 40 patentably distinguishes over the prior art of record.

Furthermore, appellants respectfully submit that the prior art does not disclose or suggest the personalized shopping list containing goods selected by the consumer in a selected retail outlet along with the aisle locations of the selected goods in the selected retail outlet, as recited by each of independent claims 29 and 40. Although the Scroggie reference discloses a shopping list, the Scroggie shopping list merely provides the consumer with a list of food items needed to prepare a selected recipe along with available coupons. The personalized shopping list of the present invention contains aisle locations at any one of an unlimited number of retail outlets.

By offering consumers the ability to electronically prepare an interactive shopping list over a network through keyboard entries, mouse clicks, voice commands or via virtual shopping, the claimed invention gives consumers the added benefit of a customized shopping list and coupons tailored to their selection of goods. This enables consumers to obtain

advanced knowledge of the aisle location of each intended purchase within their selected retail outlet and enhances shopping convenience. In addition to benefiting the consumer, the inventive system and method assists retailers in inventory anticipation and helps build customer loyalty. For manufacturers of products sold in the retail environment, the inventive system and method provides a targeted method of delivering coupons to pre-qualified customers that are categorically matched to planned purchases, thereby avoiding the waste and inefficiency of conventional coupon distribution methods.

Among the cited references to Zip Coupons, Excite, Scroggie and Katz, only Scroggie discloses a shopping list. However, the Scroggie shopping list differs from the claimed shopping list. None of the cited references disclose the personalized shopping list of the present invention which renders the present invention markedly distinct from the prior art.

More specifically, independent claims 29 and 40 recite a system in which consumer units are provided for receiving information over a network from a server which stores and transmits files containing a list of an unlimited number of actual participating stores, including name and location, inventory of each of the participating stores and

(optionally) coupon data. The claims further set forth a particular system for the distribution of a personalized shopping list showing aisle location in an actual, selected store and optionally generating coupons associated with selected goods. The claims recite the generation of a personalized shopping list along with a series of other clearly defined steps that are absent from the cited references.

More specifically, independent claims 29 and 40 require the establishment of a link between a consumer unit (which may be a computer, a television, a telephone, a handheld computer, or the like) and a server computer over a communications medium, transmitting from the server to the consumer unit a list of participating retailers, displaying the list of retailers on the consumer unit so that the consumer may select one of the displayed retailers, transmitting from the server to the consumer unit a list of the inventory of goods of the selected retailer or a list of goods generally sold by a particular type of retailer selected by the consumer and, in response to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer, transmitting from the server to the consumer computer a file containing a list of the selected goods identifying the aisle location of the selected goods in a selected retail outlet and transmitting coupons for the selected goods.

Independent claims 29 and 40 recite subject matter that is not disclosed or rendered obvious by the cited prior art.

Zip Coupons, either alone or in combination with one or more of Scroggie, Excite, and Katz, does not disclose a system for performing all of the following steps: (1) displaying a list of participating, individually-selectable retail outlets; (2) displaying a list of either the inventory of goods offered for sale by a selected retail outlet or goods generally sold by a particular type of retail outlet selected by the consumer; (3) allowing the consumer to select one or more of the displayed goods; (4) providing a shopping list identifying the physical location (aisle number) of the selected goods in the selected retail outlet; and (5) generating coupons for the selected goods after the foregoing selections are made.

Step (4) above is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references.

Zip Coupons merely discloses the concept of targeted coupon distribution by disclosing that coupons for certain generic product categories (not retail outlets) can be accessed by a consumer based on zip code. Zip Coupons does not disclose any structure or method for the generation of a customized shopping list based on selections of goods by a

consumer from a list of user-selectable goods available at a selected retail outlet.

Accordingly, Zip Coupons does not disclose or suggest the structure or steps of claims 29 and 40, each of which requires that the server transmit to a consumer unit, in response to the selection by the consumer of one of the displayed retailers, a list of the inventory of goods of a selected retailer and displaying the list on the consumer unit.

Neither Scroggie, Excite, Katz or Burke cure the foregoing defects of Zip Coupons. The references do not disclose a system responsive to selections made from a list of participating user-selectable retail outlets and user-selectable goods to generate a customized shopping list containing a list of the selected goods and aisle locations of the selected goods at the selected retail outlet.

As noted above, Scroggie discloses the generation of a shopping list which does not contain aisle locations of selected goods in a selected retail outlet.

Excite discloses an on-line coupon generation system which offers consumers with coupons based on their shopping interests. Excite does not disclose or suggest the generation of a personalized shopping list.

Katz discloses a method for on-line selection of goods. However, it does not disclose or suggest the generation of a personalized shopping list.

Claims 29 and 40 recite a system and method in which a coupon server transmits and displays on a consumer unit a file containing a list of participating retail outlets for selection of a retail outlet by a consumer and another file containing the inventory of goods sold at the selected retail outlet (or a generic list of goods generally sold at a particular type of retail outlet). The server is responsive to consumer selections to distribute a list of selected goods identifying the aisle location of the selected goods in the selected retail outlet and optionally for distributing coupons based on the selected goods. Neither Zip Coupons, Scroggie or Excite disclose or suggest the claimed combination of structure or steps.

Burke was cited as disclosing data representative of the physical layout of the participating retail outlets indicating the location of the goods offered for sale, and means responsive to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer to transmit a file for display on the display monitor of the consumer unit containing data identifying the location in the selected retail outlet of the goods selected by the consumer.

Appellants respectfully note, however, that independent claims 29 and 40 recite that the file transmitted from the coupon server to the respective consumer unit in response to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer contains data identifying the aisle location in the selected retail outlet of the goods selected by the consumer.

Stated otherwise, the claims do not recite a virtual on-line shopping system of the type disclosed by Burke, but recite the on-line generation of a customized shopping list for use at an actual retail outlet. Burke does not contemplate an actual retail outlet and discloses a hypothetical store having a hypothetical layout. The Burke "warehouse" does not exist in the physical world, so that no legitimate argument can be made that Burke somehow suggests the generation of a customized shopping list containing aisle numbers for use by a consumer while shopping at an actual store. Burke conveys a graphical representation of a non-existent store with shelves stocking as many as all of the 50,000 types of goods offered for sale throughout the entire country as maintained by national databases. The server of the Burke virtual store contains data identifying the virtual location of goods solely to graphically render the visual images of the hypothetical warehouse. However, the physical location data is not provided to the consumer in the form of

an actual store layout and no shopping list of selected goods containing aisle numbers of the goods in the actual, selected retail outlet is provided by Burke, as required by independent claims 29 and 40.

Claims 29 and 40 recite a system for generating a shopping list containing selected goods available at an actual retail outlet selected by the consumer. The list containing the participating retail outlets may contain an unlimited number of actual participating retail outlets, thus enabling the inventive system and method to enable consumers over a large geographic area to obtain shopping lists customized to retail outlets in their local area, as recited by various dependent claims. The customized shopping list is transmitted to the user by the coupon server in a format which identifies the consumer's selected goods along with the aisle location in the selected actual store at which the selected goods are sold, and optionally transmits coupons for the selected goods.

Burke, on the other hand, discloses the generation of a simulated warehouse on a consumer computer, which enables consumers to purchase goods on-line. Although the server of Burke contains data specifying the physical layout of the warehouse, this data is used solely for rendering the graphics required to implement a virtual on-line store. Burke does not disclose the transmission of a shopping list containing aisle locations of selected goods at an actual retail outlet.

According to the claimed invention, consumers do not shop at a virtual supermarket, but select goods on-line and receive a list of the selected goods along with a shopping list identifying the aisle location in the actual retail outlet at which the goods are located. The consumer physically visits the selected store after obtaining the list identifying the aisle location and optional coupons for the selected goods. This is markedly distinct from the Burke reference.

Claims 30, 36 and 37 contain subject matter that is separately patentable. Claim 30 depends upon claim 29 and recites that the first means of the coupon server comprises means for acquiring identifying indicia for identifying the geographical location of a consumer unit connected thereto, selecting one or more participating retail outlets in the vicinity of the consumer unit, and downloading for display on the display monitor of the consumer unit the first file containing a list of the selected retail outlets. None of the cited references discloses the generation of a list of selected retail outlets as recited in claim 30.

Dependent claim 36 depends upon claim 29 and intervening dependent claim 35 and recites the downloading of a third file containing electronic coupons corresponding to one or more selected goods and a personalized shopping list containing the selected goods and identifying the aisle

locations of the selected goods in the retail outlet at which the point-of-sale unit is located. None of the cited references discloses or suggests the generation of a personalized shopping list containing aisle locations of selected goods in a retail outlet at which a point-of-sale unit is located.

Dependent claim 37 depends upon claim 29 and recites a second file containing graphical data for displaying on a respective consumer unit a representation of the physical layout of the goods in the selected retail outlet. As noted above, Burke discloses a virtual representation of an imaginary warehouse and not an actual retail outlet.

Accordingly, appellants respectfully submit that the subject matter of claims 29-40 is patentably distinct from that disclosed in Zip Coupons, Storey, Excite, Scroggie, Katz and Burke, and that the rejection based on these references should not be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

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(9) Appendix

Appealed claims 29-40 are reproduced below in smooth form:

29. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases, comprising:

a plurality of consumer units each operable by consumers and comprising a display monitor, a memory for storing data to be displayed on the display monitor, a data processing unit connected to the display monitor and the memory and having communication means connectable over a communication medium to at least a coupon server, and a user input device to permit a consumer to make one or more selections from choices displayed on the display monitor;

a coupon server located remotely from the consumer units and comprising a memory for storing data corresponding to a plurality of participating retail outlets including data identifying each of the retail outlets by name, inventory of goods offered for sale, and aisle location of the goods in the participating retail outlets, and for storing coupon data used for generating electronic discount coupons for selected goods, and a data processing unit having communication means connectable over the communication medium to the consumer units, the coupon server further comprising

first means responsive to a connection with a respective consumer unit to transmit for display on the display monitor of the respective consumer unit a first file containing a list of the participating retail outlets which may be individually selected by the consumer using the user input device of the respective consumer unit,

second means for transmitting to the respective consumer unit for display on the display monitor thereof a second file containing one of a list of the inventory of goods offered for sale by a selected retail outlet or a list of goods generally sold in retail outlets of a particular type, the displayed list of goods being individually selectable by the consumer using the user input device, and

third means responsive to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer to transmit to the respective consumer unit data corresponding to the selected goods including coupons for one or more of the selected goods, or, if such coupons are not available for the selected goods at a selected retail outlet, coupons corresponding to competitively-branded goods or for the selected goods at another retail outlet, and a personalized shopping list containing the selected goods and the aisle location in the selected retail outlet of the selected goods.

30. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; wherein the first means of the coupon server comprises means for acquiring identifying indicia for identifying the geographical location of a consumer unit connected thereto, selecting one or more participating retail outlets in the vicinity of the consumer unit, and downloading for display on the display monitor of the consumer unit the first file containing a list of the selected retail outlets.

31. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 30; wherein the communication medium comprises a public telephone network, and the means for acquiring identifying indicia comprises means for acquiring Caller ID data to identify the geographical location of the consumer unit.

32. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 30; wherein the means for acquiring identifying indicia comprises means for transmitting a file to the consumer unit containing a form requesting the consumer to identify the geographical location of the consumer unit.

33. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; further comprising a hardcopy apparatus for producing a hardcopy of electronic coupons transmitted to the consumer unit.

34. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 33; wherein the hardcopy apparatus comprises a printer connected to a consumer unit.

35. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; further comprising a point-of-sale unit located in a participating retail outlet and comprising a display monitor, a memory for storing data to be displayed on the display monitor, a data processing unit connected to the display monitor and the memory and having communication means connectable over a communication medium to the coupon server, a user input device to permit a consumer to make one or more selections from choices displayed on the display monitor, and a hardcopy apparatus for producing a hardcopy of electronic coupons.

36. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases

according to claim 35; wherein the coupon server is located remotely from the point-of-sale unit, and further comprises fifth means for transmitting to the point-of-sale unit a fourth file containing the identity of goods offered for sale by the retail outlet at which the point-of-sale unit is located, the goods being individually selectable by the consumer using the user input device; wherein the third means of the coupon server is responsive to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer to transmit the third file for display on the display monitor of the point-of-sale unit containing second data corresponding to the selected goods, the third file containing electronic coupons corresponding to one or more of the selected goods and a personalized shopping list containing the selected goods and identifying the aisle locations of the selected goods in the retail outlet at which the point-of-sale unit is located.

37. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; wherein the second file contains graphical data for displaying on the respective consumer unit a representation of the physical layout of the goods in the selected retail outlet.

38. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; wherein the one or more consumer units comprise client computers on a network.

39. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing grocery coupons matched to planned purchases according to claim 29; wherein the coupon server comprises an Internet host computer.

40. A system for generating personalized shopping lists and distributing coupons matched to planned purchases, comprising:

a server connectable over a communication medium to a plurality of remotely located consumer units and having a memory for storing data corresponding to a plurality of participating retail outlets including data identifying each of the retail outlets by name, data identifying inventory of goods offered for sale, and graphical data for displaying a representation of the retail outlets including a physical layout of the goods in the retail outlets, and for storing coupon data used for generating electronic discount coupons for selected goods, the server further comprising

first means responsive to a connection with a respective consumer unit to transmit for display on a display

monitor of the respective consumer unit a first file containing a list of the participating retail outlets which may be individually selected by the consumer using a user input device of the respective consumer unit,

second means for transmitting to the respective consumer unit for display therein a second file containing graphical data for displaying a representation of a selected retail outlet including the physical layout of the goods in the selected retail outlet, the goods being individually selectable by the consumer using the user input device connected to the consumer unit, and

third means responsive to the selection of one or more items of goods by the consumer to transmit to the respective consumer unit data corresponding to the selected goods including electronic coupons corresponding to one or more of the selected goods and a personalized shopping list containing the selected items of goods and the aisle location in the selected retail outlet of the selected items of goods.